

## Coins

# *With legacy at stake, dealer is best bet*

By Roger Boye

**THE ANSWERS** to some recent reader questions are the subject of this week's column.

**Q—My father died this summer and left two cigar boxes overflowing with old coins, some carrying 19th-Century dates. Since there are three heirs, I'd like to get the coins appraised. The problem is I have no idea of how to do this or what the costs would be.—C.E., Elmhurst**

**A—Just take the boxes to a coin dealer. Most dealers would be willing to appraise your coins for a fee to compensate for their time.**

Some dealers charge a percentage of the appraised "wholesale" value, usually ranging from 3 to 5 per cent. For example, the Rare Coin Co. of America, 31 N. Clark St., one of Chicago's largest coin stores, charges 5 per cent of appraised value with a minimum of \$10. If you should sell your coins to the store, the fee is

waived. Other dealers will charge an hourly rate, often running from \$10 to \$20 an hour.

Of course, most dealers will examine a small number of coins without charge and possibly make an offer to buy them. But it is only reasonable that dealers charge to examine a hoard of coins.

Incidentally, you should buy a coin book at a coin or hobby store and do some rough appraising on your own. That way, you will have a better idea of whether it's worth your time to have the coins examined by a professional.

**Q—I have three Lincoln/Kennedy pennies and am wondering how much they are worth.—A.F., Chicago.**

**A—The outline of John F. Kennedy's face is stamped onto the front side of Lincoln pennies by private companies. They are, at best, souvenirs and have no value to a coin collector.**

**Q—My late father-in-law had a wallet that had**

belonged to his father who fought in the Civil War. Inside of it is one-half of a silver dollar. It is perfectly cut and shows half of the date (18). Does it have any value? We have speculated much about this half of a coin. Who was this Civil War man who had cut it? Is the other half buried with the remains of some unknown soldier?—L.F., Chicago.

**A—Sorry, but collectors are looking for entire coins with readable dates and mint marks. You have a nice conversation piece, however.**

**Q—I've got several of those 1943 steel Lincoln cents and would like to know how valuable they are. It's been five years since I've found one in circulation.—W.L., Calumet City.**

**A—Dealers are selling extremely fine specimens for about a quarter. These zinc-coated steel cents made during the war to conserve copper rarely are seen in circulation today, but are rather common in collections.**